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# John Birch Member Says Criticism Was Expected

By GLENN SCOTT

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NORFOLK — Col. James G. Martin IV said Wednesday that John Birch Society members have been expecting the spate of criticism and publicity now focused on the society.

Martin, an attorney and chief of staff of Virginia National Guard's 29th Division, is a John Birch.

"I think the current newspaper publicity is something we have been anticipating for sometime," he said. "We knew it would happen when the society became large enough and we made an impression on the enemy."

The enemy is Communism.

Martin consented to an interview about the society, but said he wanted it understood he spoke as an individual and not as an official in the organization.

He said his role is that of "a private in the back ranks."

Martin is a member-at-large of the John Birch Society, unaffiliated with any chapter. He said he became a member two years ago at the invitation of Robert H. W. Welch Jr., the society's founder.

The John Birch Society was born in Indianapolis, Ind., on Dec. 9, 1958, during a two-day meeting called by Welch, a former candy manufacturer who was born in North Carolina and now lives in Belmont, Mass. Welch had invited 11 men to the session to discuss creation of an organization to combat Communism.

## MANY CHAPTERS

Today the society has one to 100 chapters in each of 34 states and the District of Columbia, the 61-year-old Welch said recently. It has at least one chapter in Norfolk.

John Birch was a young Fundamental Baptist minister from Georgia who served as an intelligence officer in China dur-

10 days after V-J Day, supposedly by Chinese Communists.

Welch memorialized Birch as "the first victim of World War III."

Leader of the Norfolk chapter is George A. Dudley, 30, a tattooed former 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper who now works as an office machinery repairman for W. I. McKendree Co.

## TELLS PURPOSES

Dudley also was present for the interview to explain the society's purposes and methods.

The society is a militantly anti-Communist group ruled, — as one of its high officials confirms — in authoritarian fashion by Welch. Its influence is strongest in the Southwest and Southern California, reports the Christian Science Monitor.

The ultra-conservative organization — it is being called "radical" in some quarters — seeks to achieve its aims primarily through "front" organizations and letter-writing campaigns directed from its headquarters in Belmont.

These methods are necessary, its leaders contend, because of the extent of Communist infiltration of American institutions. Critics have said the society sows seeds of distrust among the people.

It has been called a secret society. Martin, Dudley and Welch say it is not. The society is reluctant to disclose its numbers and the names of members. Martin explained why:

"The overall movement would be injured if full membership was disclosed," he said. The enemy must be guessing as to the society's members.

Much of the criticism of the society has resulted from a 268-page book written by Welch in 1955 and circulated among an undisclosed list of friends.

In the confidential letter Welch called President Dwight D. Eisenhower "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy." In the document, Welch characterized John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, Milton Eisenhower and some other high government officials of being either Communist agents or dupes.

The letter, dubbed "The Politician," ante-dates the formation of the society and is not of its documents. In a press conference last week Welch said the statement about Eisenhower was "in the blunt language of a personal letter."

## MARTIN'S VIEW

He said elsewhere that groups trying to smear the society "are making completely unethical use" of the letter.

Leader Dudley and Martin disagree with a characterization of Eisenhower as a "dedicated . . . agent of the Communist conspiracy," and neither has seen a copy of "The Politician."

"If (Welch) did say it," Martin commented, "not more than 1 percent (of John Birch Society members) would agree with it."

"After all, members of the society are not people coming out of the woodwork. They are normal human beings."

Besides, Martin said, "If you don't agree with brother Welch (on certain matters) you don't have to do it."

And Dudley, a Presbyterian and father of two children, said: "There is no requirement in the society to go along with everything the society does. . . . A member doesn't have to follow to the letter anything against his moral or Christian belief."

Although dissent is permitted, Martin said the society "is not a democratic organization in that it has a chain of command and chapters are elected by members not elected."

A congressional investigation of the society, which Welch said he would welcome, has been suggested. Two California congressmen have disclosed their Birch membership.

Dudley said the chapter which he leads was formed about five months ago after he was invited

to view a film narrated by Welch and presented by one of the society's "coordinators" — 30 of whom are salaried, 100 or whom are volunteers.

Dudley, who said he belongs to no other group like the society, recalled that he was "very impressed" with the evening's program.

His chapter meets monthly, unless something special comes up, Dudley said. The members discuss the monthly bulletin from Belmont and report on projects they have been directed to undertake.

## SOCIETY PROGRAM

One of the current projects — the one receiving the most attention — is to impeach Supreme

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